

November 16, 2006

Apex Indoor Environmental Investigation

Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology Branch
Division of Public Health
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Introduction

The State of North Carolina's Departments of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) conducted environmental screening assessments of homes, schools, businesses, and a church in Apex, NC that are near the EQ facility. The NC Division of Air Quality chose the testing sites. The sites are located from 0.16 to 2.17 miles from the EQ facility. The purpose of the assessments was to: determine if these selected sites were affected by the October 5, 2006 fire at the EQ facility; determine if there was a need for additional sampling; and determine if there needed to be more guidance on cleaning nearby structures. The Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology Branch (OEEB) in DHHS conducted indoor environmental evaluations of 31 sites in Apex. The evaluations consisted of collecting wipe samples that were tested for selected metals, total cyanides, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). In addition, indoor and outdoor air monitoring for mercury vapor was done at 26 sites because a private consultant had allegedly found high mercury levels inside a structure that was near the EQ fire and there was some community concern regarding mercury.

Methodology

At each site, surface wipe samples were collected on at least two horizontal surfaces (excluding floors), one in a common area such as a living room or kitchen and one in a bedroom. For the non-residential sites (i.e., schools), a common area such as a cafeteria was chosen in addition to a classroom. Attempts were made to collect wipe samples on surfaces that had not been cleaned since the fire occurred. Since all of the sites reported some type of cleaning since the fire, it was difficult to find surfaces that had not been cleaned. Wipe samples were not collected from surfaces where dust had accumulated for an extended period of time. Sample sites included interior windowsills, smooth surfaces of furniture, shelves, and countertops. Each wipe sample area was 100 square centimeters (0.01 square meters). The following filter materials were used for the wipe samples: for metals – Environmental Express Ghost Wipe™; for PAHs – Ahlstrom™ Grade 111 glass microfiber filters; and for cyanide – Ahlstrom™ Grade 54 quantitative filter papers.

The wipe samples were submitted to the Eastern Research Group (ERG) laboratory, an independent certified lab, in Morrisville, NC and were analyzed for polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), total cyanides, and the following metals: arsenic, barium, beryllium, cadmium, chromium, cobalt, copper, lead, manganese, mercury, nickel, selenium, silver, vanadium, and zinc. Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons are possible products of combustion and the metals were present in some of the materials that were stored at EQ and would not be destroyed by the fire. DAQ tested for these same chemicals in outdoor wipe sampling at the sites.

These chemicals (with the exception of cyanide) were on the list, “Settled Dust Screening Values and Supporting Toxicity Criteria,” which was developed following the World Trade Center collapse (1).

Field blanks for cyanides, metals, and PAHs were collected for every ten wipe samples and were also submitted to ERG for analysis. Results for the blanks are listed in Table 1.

A Lumex mercury vapor analyzer was used for the indoor and outdoor mercury vapor sampling.

The sampling form (attached) used for the environmental investigation included three questions about combustion devices used at the sites that may be potential sources of indoor contaminants. More information can be found in the limitations section of this report. Information collected included questions regarding the presence or absence of unvented combustion devices (i.e., kerosene heater), primary furnace fuel source (gas or electric), and whether or not indoor tobacco smoking takes place at the site.

Data Analysis

For metals, the laboratory reported total micrograms detected per wipe sample for each of the metals on the list. For PAHs, the laboratory reported total micrograms of individual PAHs that were detected and these were added to get a value for total PAHs. For cyanide, the laboratory reported the micrograms of cyanide detected in each wipe sample. For each of the chemicals (metals, total PAHs, and cyanide), the mass of chemical detected was divided by the area of the wipe sample (in square meters) resulting in a value of micrograms of chemical per square meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^2$). For each site, the wipe sampling data for the common area and for the bedroom/other area were averaged to get one value for each site. If one of the values for a site was below the detection limit, the value for this sample was considered to be zero when calculating the average for the two samples. The average values detected in the wipe samples were compared to settled dust screening values that were developed for evaluating indoor dust contamination resulting from the World Trade Center (WTC) collapse (1). The authors of the WTC report developed the health-based screening values for indoor settled dust using EPA risk assessment methods and current toxicity criteria from EPA’s Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS), EPA’s Health Effects Assessment Summary Tables (HEAST), Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) minimum risk levels (MRLs), and other toxicity references as needed. These health-based screening values were peer reviewed and are generally accepted standards for such screening.

The mercury vapor sampling results were compared to the ATSDR residential cleanup level in air of 1 microgram per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ or 1000 nanograms per cubic meter, ng/m^3) (2).

Summary of Sampling Results

Responses to questions about potential sources of indoor contaminants

Of the 31 sites selected for environmental sampling, 6.5% (n=2) reported the use of unvented combustion devices; 52% (n=16) of the sites reported using gas as the main source of energy for home heating purposes; and 16% (n=5) of the sites reported that indoor tobacco smoking had occurred.

Mercury Vapor Sampling

The mercury vapor sampling results are listed in Table 2, Mercury Vapor Sampling Results. Sampling for mercury vapor inside and outside at 26 sites detected mercury vapor concentrations from 1 to 335 ng/m³. All of these concentrations are well below the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) guidance level of 1000 ng/m³ for mercury in indoor air at residences and businesses.

Surface Wipe Sampling for Cyanide

The wipe sampling results are listed in Table 1, Wipe Sampling Results. Surface wipe sampling did not detect cyanide in any of the samples.

Surface Wipe Sampling for Metals

The wipe sampling results are listed in Table 1, Wipe Sampling Results. Surface wipe sampling for metals detected lead above WTC health-based screening values for settled dust at one site (site 35). The sampling detected lead at 326 and 294 micrograms per square meter (ug/m²) at the two locations for a site average of 310 ug/m². The WTC screening value for lead is 270 ug/m². Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology Branch (OEEB) staff learned that this site (a house) was built in 1961 thus lead-based paint may be the source of this lead dust. OEEB advised the residents of these results and advised them to identify potential indoor sources of lead dust and to control those potential sources.

For all of the other sites, the indoor dust wipe sampling did not detect metals above the WTC health-based screening values for settled dust.

Surface Wipe Sampling for Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons

The wipe sampling results are listed in Table 1, Wipe Sampling Results. Surface wipe sampling did not detect polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons above the WTC health-based screening values for settled dust in any of the samples. Most of the sample results are below detection limits.

Limitations

This investigation has the following limitations:

- The wipe samples were collected more than 15 days after the fire started.
- At some sampling sites, it was difficult to find surfaces to collect dust wipe samples because most of the surfaces had been cleaned. Occupants at all of the sites reported that they had done some type of cleaning.
- At some of the sites, there were potential sources of indoor contaminants that could have contaminated indoor surfaces, including unvented combustion devices and indoor tobacco smoking.

Conclusions

Results from this sampling survey revealed that contaminants in settled dust at these sites are not present in concentrations that pose a health risk. In addition, the results do not indicate

significant or widespread contamination associated with the fire at the EQ facility. One site with elevated lead concentrations is under investigation and is most likely due to the older age of this site compared to others sites sampled. Given the limitations cited above and the results of this survey, NCDPH recommends no further sampling. Further, the results indicate that no additional cleaning measures are necessary.

References

- 1) World Trade Center Indoor Environmental Assessment: Response to Peer Review Comments on the Report for Selecting Contaminants of Potential Concern and Setting Health-Based Benchmarks, US EPA, NY City Dept of Health and Mental Hygiene, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, NY State Dept of Health, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration. May 2003.
- 2) Suggested Action Levels for Indoor Mercury Vapors in Homes or Businesses with Indoor Gas Regulators, ATSDR. This document was produced on December 4, 2000.

Attachments

- Table 1 - Wipe Sampling Results
Table 2 – Mercury Vapor Sampling Results
Sampling Form

Apex Fire

Indoor Environmental Evaluation

Sampling Form

Date: _____
Name: _____
Address: _____
Mailing Address: _____
Telephone numbers: _____

Information about the site:

Description (house, school, business, etc): _____
Unvented combustion devices: _____
Energy source for the furnace: _____
Indoor tobacco smoking: _____
Cleaning history since the fire on October 5, 2006: _____

Wipe Samples:

Location	Type	Sample #

Mercury vapor monitoring results:

Time: _____ inside: _____
Time: _____ outside: _____

Person(s) collecting information: _____

Table 1 - Wipe Sampling Results

Summary of Indoor Surface Sampling Results (Sorted By Sample #) in micrograms per square meter
Apex, NC

Site	Distance‡	Sample	ug/m ²	Arsenic	Barium	Beryllium	Cadmium	Chromium	Cobalt	Copper	Lead	Manganese	Mercury	Selenium	Silver	Nickel	Zinc	Vanadium	Total PAH	HCN (Ref)
1	0.16			387*	109752*	3136*	1557*	4704*	31358*	62716*	270*	31358*	157*	7839*	7839*	31358*	470366*	10975*	145*	
	001	CR																	<0.077	
	002	CR																	<0.077	
	003	CR																	< 40	
	004	CR																	< 40	
	005	CR		1.94	50.40	<0.55	5.38	16.50	0.58	124.00	45.60	16.00	0.46	<0.52	2.46	66.30	1680.00	1.23		
	N/A	BR																		
	SITE 1 AVERAGE			1.94	50.40	<0.55	5.38	16.50	0.58	124.00	45.60	16.00	0.46	<0.52	2.46	66.30	1680.00	1.23	<0.077	< 40
2	0.21																			
	010	CR		1.72	34.8	<0.55	4.03	12.90	3.33	114.00	41.0	18.60	<0.41	<0.52	< 0.57	12.40	169.00	1.17		
	011	CR																	<0.077	
	012	CR																	< 40	
	013	BR		1.47	44.6	<0.55	2.20	12.0	0.36	68.20	39.60	14.10	<0.41	<0.52	<0.57	7.80	883.00	1.10		
	014	BR																	<0.077	
	015	BR																	< 40	
	SITE 2 AVERAGE			1.60	39.70	<0.55	3.12	12.45	1.85	91.10	40.30	16.35	<0.41	<0.52	<0.57	10.10	526.00	1.14	<0.077	< 40
5	0.52																			
	016	CR		7.85	95.1	<0.55	4.88	28.60	1.99	163.00	44.30	87.90	3.80	1.09	<0.57	33.90	3150.00	3.59		
	017	CR																	<0.077	
	018	CR																	< 40	
	019	BR		1.74	55.90	<0.55	13.40	13.70	0.43	67.50	27.90	15.20	<0.41	<0.52	<0.57	16.50	1430.00	1.05		
	020	BR																	<0.077	
	021	BR																	< 40	
	022	Blank		1.56	16.9	<0.55	<0.45	12.80	0.36	52.20	24.90	10.60	<0.41	<0.52	<0.57	3.59	1760.00	0.80		
	023	Blank																	<0.077	
	024	Blank																	< 40	
	SITE 5 AVERAGE			4.80	75.50	<0.55	9.14	21.15	1.21	115.25	36.10	51.55	1.90	0.55	<0.57	25.20	2290.00	2.32	<0.077	< 40
3	0.24																			
	025	CR		1.60	30.5	<0.55	4.91	12.50	0.27	52.60	25.20	12.10	<0.41	<0.52	<0.57	6.32	1850.00	0.84		
	026	CR																	<0.077	
	027	CR																	< 40	
	028	BR		2.76	78.90	<0.55	5.94	16.70	1.11	86.80	142.00	29.10	<0.41	<0.52	<0.57	17.10	1540.00	2.55		
	029	BR																	<0.077	
	030	BR																	< 40	
	SITE 3 AVERAGE			2.18	54.70	<0.55	5.43	14.60	0.69	69.70	83.60	20.60	<0.41	<0.52	<0.57	11.71	1695.00	1.70	<0.077	< 40
10	0.76																			
	031	CR		2.63	36.30	<0.55	1.87	15.80	16.0	82.30	41.90	48.70	<0.41	0.55	<0.57	9.73	3100.00	1.76		
	032	CR																	<0.077	
	033	CR																	< 40	
	034	BR		2.23	68.90	<0.55	7.38	15.60	0.61	8.82	48.20	19.20	<0.41	<0.52	<0.57	27.30	1140.00	1.34		
	035	BR																	<0.077	
	036	BR																	< 40	
	SITE 10 AVERAGE			2.43	52.60	<0.55	4.63	15.70	8.31	45.56	45.05	33.95	<0.41	0.28	<0.57	18.52	2120.00	1.55	<0.077	< 40

Site	Distance‡	Sample	Arsenic	Barium	Beryllium	Cadmium	Chromium	Cobalt	Copper	Lead	Manganese	Mercury	Selenium	Silver	Nickel	Zinc	Vanadium	Total PAH	HCN
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37	1.88																	
205	CR	2.08	148.00	<0.55	1.24	14.40	<0.25	75.70	26.10	14.10	<0.41	<0.52	<0.57	7.26	2630.00	1.18		
206	CR															1.00		
207	CR															< 40		
208	BR	2.43	291.00	<0.55	2.57	12.50	<0.25	57.20	24.80	11.30	<0.41	<0.52	<0.57	5.21	1780.00	1.02		
209	BR															1.00		
210	BR															< 40		
211	Blank	1.66	58.90	<0.55	0.87	12.00	<0.25	55.70	23.50	10.00	<0.41	<0.52	<0.57	4.88	1510.00	0.89		
212	Blank															<0.077		
213	Blank															< 40		
SITE 37 AVERAGE		2.26	219.50	<0.55	1.91	13.45	<0.25	66.45	25.45	12.70	<0.41	<0.52	<0.57	6.24	2205.00	1.10	1.00	< 40
45	0.29																	
214	CR	3.95	219.00	<0.55	11.00	23.40	1.14	246.00	64.50	57.00	1.60	1.18	1.56	54.40	5440.00	3.24		
215	CR															1.00		
216	CR															< 40		
217	BR	2.45	401.00	<0.55	11.10	17.70	0.77	150.00	58.30	41.40	1.53	0.90	<0.57	27.30	2040.00	2.82		
218	BR															<0.077		
219	BR															< 40		
SITE 45 AVERAGE		3.20	310.00	<0.55	11.05	20.55	0.96	198.00	61.40	49.20	1.57	1.04	0.78	40.85	3740.00	3.03	0.50	< 40
35	0.68																	
220	CR	65.00	472.00	<0.55	112.00	71.00	7.72	270.00	326.00	270.00	2.46	1.87	<0.57	160.00	6380.00	8.74		
221	CR															1.00		
222	CR															< 40		
223	BR	34.20	580.00	<0.55	19.00	64.00	25.00	298.00	294.00	184.00	4.58	2.37	1.51	80.40	4370.00	9.39		
224	BR															2.00		
225	BR															< 40		
SITE 35 AVERAGE		49.60	526.00	<0.55	65.50	67.50	16.36	284.00	310.00	227.00	3.52	2.12	0.76	120.20	5375.00	9.07	1.50	< 40

* Settled dust screening values from the World Trade Center Report (1)

‡ Distance in miles from the EQ facility

Table 2 - Mercury Vapor Sampling Results

Summary of Indoor and Outdoor Mercury Vapor Readings
Apex, NC

Site #	Date	Time	Hg Reading	Hg Reading	
			Indoor	Outdoor	
			(ng/m3) (Ref)	(ng/m3) (Ref)	
1		10/20/2006	1603	295	335
2		10/23/2006	1230	72	72
3		10/23/2006	1427	111	113
4		Declined	Declined	Declined	Declined
5		10/23/2006	1306	93	93
6		Declined	Declined	Declined	Declined
7		10/25/2006	1435	66	69
8		10/23/2006	1531	83	84
9		10/25/2006	1633	57	35
10		10/23/2006	1459	90	94
11		10/26/2006	0952	65	70
12		10/24/2006	1315	57	68
13		10/24/2006	N/A	N/A	N/A
14		10/24/2006	1350	72	80
15		Blanks	Blanks	Blanks	Blanks
16		Blanks	Blanks	Blanks	Blanks
21		10/23/2006	N/A	N/A	N/A
22		10/25/2006	1348	50	41
23		10/24/2006	0959	57	60
24		10/24/2006	0934	44	59
25		10/24/2006	1050	3	1
26		10/25/2006	1734	57	62
27		10/23/2006	N/A	N/A	N/A
28		10/24/2006	N/A	N/A	N/A
29		10/24/2006	1100	21	30
30		10/24/2006	1135	29	28
31		Declined	Declined	Declined	Declined
32		10/25/2006	1330	40	13
33		10/24/2006	N/A	N/A	N/A
34		Declined	Declined	Declined	Declined
35		10/26/2006	1436	91	78
36		10/25/2006	1158	4	5
37		10/26/2006	1208	57	55
38		Blanks	Blanks	Blanks	Blanks
39		Blanks	Blanks	Blanks	Blanks
41		10/25/2006	1512	61	50

42		10/26/2006	1130	66	55	
43		10/25/2006	1555	58	51	
44		Declined	Declined	Declined	Declined	Declined
45		10/26/2006	1315	77	70	
46		Blanks	Blanks	Blanks	Blanks	Blanks
47		Blanks	Blanks	Blanks	Blanks	Blanks